

you don't you'll never be capable of extending love to others." Still, the process is difficult and can sometimes take years. It's why thousands of women find themselves stuck in unhealthy situations for long periods, unable to take control of their lives.

The following woman confronted adversity, found the strength to pull herself out of the dismal hole of self-blame, and emerged with a shared revelation: The key to turning your life around is learning love yourself. Despite this woman's hardships, she says her life is better and more hopeful than ever.

OVERCOMING PHYSICAL HURDLES—TAINA RODRIGUEZ, 21, CHICAGO

My wheelchair has been one of my accessories for 11 years now. We go everywhere together. The chair is as much a part of my life as the Marfan's syndrome that put me in it. This genetic disorder caused my spine to curve and damaged my corneas. As a child, I wore thick glasses, and my body was tall and lanky. I was a prime target for teasing. I remember being called everything from four eyes to banana back. For years I was ashamed of my appearance, my wheelchair, and my inability to do things for myself.

Then, in high school, I met Mari. She would do my hair, and she and I would go shopping together. We would even go to clubs, and I'd wiggle in my wheelchair while she danced next to me. My friend was never embarrassed by me, she didn't seem to care that I was stuck in a wheelchair, so why should I? Instead of feeling ugly, I felt lucky. Maybe I couldn't do everything Mari did, but I almost always found a way to participate, even if it had to be as a spectator at times. For the first time in my life, I felt like a normal teenager. Unfortunately, my health wasn't as resilient. Three years ago, a grueling 18-hour surgery to repair a ruptured heart valve left me in a coma for five days, near death. When I woke up and learned that I had almost died, I was shocked. I couldn't believe my body was strong enough to pull itself out of a coma. I realized what I had slowly been coming to terms with for the past two years: that I had great inner strength and that there was more to my body than its attachment to a wheelchair. Instead of hating my body for its weaknesses, I felt blessed to be alive and eager to get back to my new life.

I learned to drive and bought a car. I also got an internship at Access Living, a non-profit organization in Chicago that champions rights for the disabled. There, two women and I started the Empowered Fe-Fes, a group for young women with disabilities to talk about issues such as body image and sexuality. I later won a national award for my service to the disabled, and my internship led to a job as an assistant in the Chicago office of Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky (D-Illinois).

I don't think my relationship with my wheelchair will ever be perfect. I still wish I could dance and drive with the full use of my legs, but I have made peace with that. My wheelchair is, after all, a source of mobility, and it doesn't hold me back from living the life I love.

#### STOP VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN CONGRESSIONAL BRIEFINGS

**HON. DANNY K. DAVIS**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 7, 2002*

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, The narrator in the PBS documentary written by Mary

Dickson, "No Safe Place—Violence Against Women," began by relating that:

In the early hours of a hot August morning, three men pulled a woman from her car after a minor traffic accident. The men threatened her with a crowbar, made her strip, then chased her until she jumped off a bridge to her death in the Detroit River. None of the 40 or so passers-by tried to help the 33-year-old woman. Some reports say onlookers cheered as the men taunted her.

A judge in New Bedford, MA, sentenced the confessed rapist of a 14-year-old girl to probation. He then said that the victim "... can't go through life as a victim. She's 14. She got raped. Tell her to get over it."

The San Francisco Chronicle reported that:

Cassandra Floyd was a respected physician, a single mother living in an affluent San Jose suburb, and ardent volunteer and a role model for young black women. The 35-year-old was also the victim of domestic violence ... when her ex-husband shot and killed her as their 4-year-old daughter slept nearby and shot and wounded Floyd's mother. He then fled and killed himself.

These are not isolated incidents selected to cause sensationalism. Violence against women is a worldwide epidemic.

According to the NOW Legal Defense and Education Fund,

Violence against women—rape, sexual assault and domestic violence—affects women worldwide, regardless of class or race. Violence not only affects women in the home, but in the workplace, school and every arena of life.

The Center for Health and Gender Equity (CHANGE) at the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health found that

Around the world at least one woman in every three has been beaten, coerced into sex, or otherwise abused in her lifetime. Most often the abuser is a member of her own family. Increasingly, gender-based violence is recognized as a major public health concern and a violation of human rights.

The dimensions of this issue were illustrated in a joint study by the Jacobs Institute of Women's Health and the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, which made the following conclusions:

In 1998 there were approximately 2.8 million assaults on women. The Journal of the American Women's Association reported that those most at risk are "... younger, separated or divorced, of lower socioeconomic status and unemployed." The risk of assault by an intimate partner increases when a woman is pregnant.

Just four in ten women who are physically injured by a partner seek professional medical treatment.

Women are more likely to be the victim of rape or sexual assaults by an intimate partner or acquaintance, rather than by a stranger.

The National Violence Against Women Survey found that one out of every 12 women, a total of 8.2 million women, has been stalked at some point in their lives.

Women are more likely than men to be killed by someone they know, and nearly one-third of women are killed by an intimate partner, compared to approximately four percent of men, according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics.

Black women are more likely than White or Hispanic women to be the victims of nonlethal violent crimes.

These statistics are appalling. Just as we have come together with our allies to declare

war against terrorism, so too must we unite and declare war against this form of terrorism—violence against women.

#### INTRODUCTION OF THE WORLD WAR I VETERANS MEDAL OF HONOR JUSTICE ACT

**HON. BENJAMIN A. GILMAN**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 7, 2002*

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce H.R. 3890, a bill to facilitate the posthumous awarding of a long overdue medal of honor to Sergeant Henry Johnson, of Albany, NY, for actions he preformed in the First World War. Additionally, the legislation requests that the Secretary of the Army review the cases of other African-American veterans from World War I, who have had their accomplishments overlooked due to racism.

This legislation is not without precedent. During the 100th Congress, my former colleagues Joe Dioguardi and Mickey Leland first brought the issue of racism in the awarding of medals of honor to national prominence. In 1997, after years of study, the Secretary of the Army finally recommended that seven Black veterans from World War II have their prior Distinguished Service Cross Awards upgraded to Medals of Honor. Likewise, a similar decision was taken regarding Asian-American veterans from World War II, including that of our esteemed colleague in the Senate, DANIEL INOUE. Furthermore, last year, I joined my colleague from Florida, BOB WEXLER, in introducing legislation to reconsider the records of several prominent Jewish veterans from World War II and Korea, who had been previously denied Medals of Honor. I was gratified that this bill, H.R. 606, was included in the fiscal year 2002 Defense Authorization Act.

Yet, despite this important progress, Henry Johnson and his colleagues from the Great War still await due recognition for their service to their country. The sole exception to this shameful legacy was the example of Corporal Freddie Stowers, who was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor in 1991, in large part due to the tireless efforts of former Congressman Dioguardi in promoting his case to the Department of Defense from 1987–1991.

Unlike more recent conflicts, which have been promoted heavily through print and televised media, the First World War has largely receded into the mists of time. What was originally known as the Great War receives scant attention these days, primarily it has become viewed as a failure of sorts. It was, in the words of President Wilson, the "War to end all wars," yet tragically, it did nothing of the kind. World War I was the most widespread, destructive and costly conflict the world had ever seen up to that point, but it paled in comparison to the destruction of the Second World War.

Against this backdrop, the American public has, especially since 1945, forgotten the sacrifices of the generation that made the world "safe for democracy." This is no more true for the African-American veterans of World War I, and especially, for Sergeant Henry Johnson.

On May 14, 1918, Sergeant Johnson, an NCO with the 369th Infantry Regiment, a Black unit of New York National Guard troops,

was stationed as part of a five-man watch in Northern France. Early that morning, Johnson and a fellow soldier were attacked by 24 Germans. Johnson's companion was wounded and captured. When his rifle subsequently jammed, Sergeant Johnson used his bayonet and a knife to kill and wound several Germans. He eventually freed his companion and drove the Germans off, before succumbing to the nearly two dozen wounds he suffered himself.

For his actions in battle, the Government of France awarded its highest military honor to Sergeant Johnson, the Croix de Guerre with Gold Palm. Yet he received nothing from his own country until 1997, when he was posthumously awarded the Purple Heart, a decoration which all U.S. personnel are entitled to if wounded in combat.

Henry Johnson returned to civilian life after the war and attempted to resume his old job as a railway porter. However, his wounds prevented this and he died penniless in 1937.

Mr. Speaker, Sergeant Johnson's case is not unique among African-American veterans of World War I, but it is the most egregious. It is not as if the U.S. Army was totally ignorant of his accomplishments. There is ample evidence that his profile and his story were used to sell war bonds in African-American communities in the closing days of the war. Moreover, in 1976, the Army had no problem featuring him in a U.S. Army recruiting poster. Yet to this day, more than 83 years after the fighting stopped on the Western Front, elements of the military are resisting awarding Sergeant Johnson the Medal of Honor.

Last year, after a 4-year long review, outgoing Secretary of the Army Caldera approved a recommendation that Henry Johnson be awarded the Medal of Honor. Last spring, Former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs General Shelton recommended against such an award stating that "proper procedure" had not been followed in the application process.

I believe that any reasonable person would be able to see that it would be impossible to follow outlined procedure in this case, 83 years after the fact. The chief requirement for the award, eyewitness testimony, is an unreachable goal in that any such persons in this instance are long dead. Moreover, it is absurd to argue that Sergeant Johnson should have submitted an application for the award within the proscribed time frame of 3 years. Given the entrenched and pervasive racism that existed in American society and the Army in 1921, it is not a stretch of logic to say such an effort would have been fruitless.

It is for this reason that this legislation further requires the Army to revisit the service records of every other African-American soldier from World War I who was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross or the French Croix De Guerre to determine if a medal upgrade or additional award of the Medal of Honor is warranted.

Mr. Speaker, our Nation has belatedly acknowledged that certain African-American and Asian-American veterans of World War II were unjustly denied proper recognition for military service above and beyond the call of duty. It is now time for us to admit that one debt remains to be paid: The proper acknowledgement of the courageous service of African-American veterans in World War I.

The American veterans of World War I have almost all departed. The VA estimated that ap-

proximately 1,000 remained alive at the start of fiscal year 2002. It is long past time for us to recognize the service of Henry Johnson and his fellow African-American soldiers in World War I. When he first brought this issue before this House in 1987, my former colleague from New York, Representative DiGuardi, in criticizing the Pentagon's aversion to review the cases of Black veterans from the World Wars for possible medal upgrades, stated that "The statute of limitations was established for criminals, not war heroes."

With this legislation, we have an opportunity to correct a longstanding injustice, a glaring blot on the noble and historic legacy of the United States Army. These cases have been referred to by some as the last loose ends of World War I. It is now time to close out this unfinished business.

#### TRIBUTE TO TRAVERSE CITY WEST SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

#### HON. BART STUPAK

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 7, 2002*

Mr. STUPAK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the administration, staff, and students of Traverse City West Senior High School, a school in northern Michigan. In just four years Traverse City West has distinguished itself through the academic success of its students and through national recognition of the school's visual and performing arts programs.

Barbara M. White, a distinguished former president at Mills College in Oakland, California, is quoted as saying, "The basic purpose of a liberal arts education is to liberate the human being to exercise his or her potential to the fullest." Upon hearing those words, I'm sure most listeners would immediately think of a college or university education, but Traverse City West Senior High is preparing its students for a successful life at the high school level.

The school's fine arts curriculum includes a choral program with six performing groups, band and orchestra, an award-winning newspaper and yearbook, theater arts, video and production; there are classes in photography, pottery, ceramics, metals, jewelry, drawing and painting, sculpture, computer art and traditional American arts.

For those students not taking formal arts classes, the Humanities program includes extensive exposure to painting, sculpture, music, dance and film. The arts are incorporated into the science, math and language areas, according to the expertise of the teacher and in collaboration with the arts department. Finally, the school itself is decorated with art murals and stained glass windows designed by students, and music is incorporated into classroom study and even staff meetings.

The study of other cultures, other peoples and other times is part of the school's comprehensive learning environment. Mr. Speaker, these programs have strong parental support for projects and field trips. Accustomed as we may be to booster clubs for sports programs, this "booster" spirit for the study of arts, crafts and humanities must be viewed as unique at the high school level.

I do not rise today, Mr. Speaker, to propose that Traverse City West Senior High be taken

as the model for all high schools. I rise merely to point out that a combination of hard work and a rich environment can produce academic success. For example, in 2000 Traverse City West received the Governor's Cup for the big North Conference for having the most Michigan Merit Award recipients, and its total placed it sixth in the state. The Michigan Merit Award is a college scholarship based upon performance on the Michigan Educational Assessment Program. I should note that this number is more remarkable when one considers that Traverse City West received the least amount of money per student of the top ten schools listed, and it had the highest percentage of students on the free and reduced lunch program.

Consider, too, that in the four years Traverse City West Senior High has been open, its students have scored above the state and national average on the ACT test. In 1999/2000 its composite ACT score was 21.8, compared to a Michigan average of 21.3 and a national average of 21.0. As I mentioned earlier, the school's newspaper and yearbook have been honored statewide, its theater department recognized nationally, and its music department a finalist in an international competition.

Mr. Speaker, the efforts of the administration, staff, parents and students at Traverse City West High School to acknowledge the arts an essential part of education has now been recognized nationally. The school was recently notified it is the winner of the "Creative Ticket National School of Distinction Award" from the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. As a result of this award, a representative group of students has been invited to travel here to Washington to perform at the Kennedy Center and to perform at a congressional breakfast celebrating National Arts Day.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you and my House colleagues to join me in praise of the hard work and dedication of the administration, staff, parents and students of Traverse City West High School, a young school with a classical notion of a well-rounded education.

#### CONGRATULATING THE UNITED STATES MILITARY ACADEMY AT WEST POINT ON ITS BICENTEN- NIAL ANNIVERSARY

SPEECH OF

#### HON. BENJAMIN A. GILMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 6, 2002*

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, "to educate, train, and inspire the corps of cadets so that each graduate is a commissioned leader of character committed to the values of duty, honor, country; professional growth throughout a career as an officer in the United States Army; and a lifetime of selfless service to the nation."

That is the mission of an outstanding institution of rich history and formidable pride, our West Point Military Academy, along the shores of our historic Hudson River.

More than 200 years ago, Gen. George Washington, recognizing the strategic importance of West Point, established fortifications